



# A Special Look at Social Media

and pay for their credit report. When the credit report is pulled, I get an instant alert, then can pull it down and call them. Then, once they are in the system, I have an online application status and document tracking program I use that sends an automated status update every night. A good social media system is the perfect answer for The Lazy Originator, and coming soon, [www.thelazyoriginator.com](http://www.thelazyoriginator.com)!

**TS:** After 20 years of using ACT!, I have switched to Mortgage Planner CRM. It's an awesome Web-based CRM. It is easier to track e-mails, set up templates and track leads than what I had used before. I can quickly track how many leads I am getting from each source. It even works great as an iPhone app that allows me to easily access my entire database wherever I am from my phone.

**BY:** I have a high trust conversation, answer their questions and offer solutions that involve me doing their loan. If they were just calling for info, then I let them go on their way. Some call back after experiencing the wrath of some other hack LO trying to meet their quota. I get the name, e-mail and phone number from everyone who calls me. Most call rather than request info online or fill out lead capture forms. A lead from a blog caller is usually someone who has read your content, watched your videos, and decided you are the one they want to work with ... people are lurking online, sometimes for months. They want to know who is the most knowledgeable and transparent LO around ... someone they can depend on and someone who is real. When they read your blog, they get to know your personality. And people do business with others they know,

like and trust, right? Video accomplishes this issue even better, but only if you can pull it off in front of a camera. I publish content on three different blogs, all designed to drive traffic back to my main blog site. It can take a few months for your blog content to start developing calls at first. I anticipate this to double in 2011. Blogging cost me about \$400 last year. Blogging done wrong can make you look bad. I spent a lot of time reading and learning how to do it. Mark Madsen has been a big help.

Tim Storm added these tips about blogging in general:

"The key to blogging is to write good content. I see too many people who just write a sales letter for a blog article. I try to write out exactly what they searched Google for. I'm not trying to tease them to get a phone call. I lay it all out. I think a first-time homebuyer will appreciate that. If I'm searching in Google for something and I end up on a sales letter, I go back to Google and continue to search what I'm looking for. When an FHA or VA buyer does call me, they are already sold on me, my knowledge, and ability to get their loan closed. Rarely do I get a "rate shopper call."

Folks, social media is direct marketing at its best and without the huge dollar investment. It only makes sense to put your marketing efforts where the buyers look first—online. The formula is very simple:

*Quality Targeted Content  
+ Consistency*  
—————  
*Leads*

The key is the discipline it actually takes to implement and maintaining the blog. Because of my knowledge of FHA and my writing skills, a social

media guru friend of mine is encouraging me to provide a service of writing blog content for MLOs to make it easy for them. Before committing to this, I am curious how many of you would want this service and what you would pay for four articles a month for your blog. Send me an e-mail at [jeff@mortgageseminars.com](mailto:jeff@mortgageseminars.com) with your thoughts. In the meantime, develop a plan to develop a blog that will target the buyers you want to attract. The more clari-

ty you have, the more effective your result will likely be.

Go FHA!

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## What Has Social Media Done for You Lately?

By B.J. Bounds

If you look at any of the articles and research done on the benefits of social media, you'd be hard-pressed to find any downsides to using social media to promote and build your business. But as with anything that looks as good as free social and business networking, there is a potential snag: Time—more specifically, time management.

Managing the time you spend networking online versus other business-building activities or even just the day-to-day activities of running your business can make a world of difference in how effective your marketing efforts prove to be. There are several notable networking platforms and using them in conjunction with your other activities increases your online presence and visibility—as long as you're not spending too much or too little time with them.

your personal profile. Of course, you cannot take 1003 applications through Facebook, but you at least have a platform to promote your services to its 600 million-plus active users.

Another booming social media platform is Twitter, the 140 character micro-blogging phenomenon. With 200 million current Twitter accounts and 460,000 new accounts each day, Twitter is undoubtedly growing fast. Twitter really is a great tool for business. In just 140 characters,

you can share industry news, talk about your services and build relationships with potential clients who found your tweets. If you have a Web site or blog, you can link your tweets directly to them for complete details and to perhaps capture visitor information with a registration request for additional information. You can have mini conversations with interested parties, share important news,



"Social media is a commitment."

### Where we spend our time

Facebook is a wonderful marketing tool for consumer marketing. It's fun and you can do so much with it. Many of you are already communicating with friends and family on Facebook. You might even have connected with current or former clients through your personal page. But, have you considered creating a Business Page using your personal profile? With a Business Page, you have greater opportunities for promoting your business to potential clients. You can secure a user name for your business so that you can print the URL on your business cards, flyers or brochures. It's a free Web site for you that you can easily manage through

and create an online persona that will attract future clients or industry partners.

To keep in touch with your industry partners or professional groups, don't neglect LinkedIn for outstanding networking functionality for referral partners and fellow mortgage professionals. LinkedIn is the business networking tool that serves the needs of professionals in any industry or job function. Even the most basic "free" version of LinkedIn has valuable business building potential. You can post status updates similar to Facebook to keep connections involved with your business and can interact with networking groups that best suit your business and your interests.

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Contact AMX for more information: [Joinamx@lhfinancial.com](mailto:Joinamx@lhfinancial.com)



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LinkedIn provides for an online “resume” where you can list your credentials, experience, specialties, languages spoken, etc. And like Facebook and Twitter, you get amazing search engine result placements.

## How to spend your time wisely

No matter how many of the social media platforms you choose to use, it is important that you manage your time wisely so that you are not so consumed by them that you burn out and drop out completely. That would certainly be a disservice to your fans, followers, and connections and could be detrimental to your reputation. Social media is a commitment.

While it’s not as quick to maintain as other mediums, blogging is a good example of the importance of sticking with it. So many companies start blogging, but give up after one or two posts when it becomes difficult to find the time to develop fresh content on a regular or semi-regular basis. Then, they have a blog link on their main Web site that leads to nowhere. Search engines will forever continue to drive traffic to your earlier posts, but visitors might think you’ve gone out of business when they see you’ve been inactive for so long.

The same pitfall lingers in the background for social media that require greater regularity and frequency. What makes the pitfall easier to combat in the platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn is that there are tools specifically designed to help you save time and energy when posting to multiple mediums.

❖ **All-in-one suites:** Technology companies know that you’re busy. Just like your loan origination system (LOS) provider, they work hard to ensure that their technology, while developmentally complicated, serves to ease your daily work life. Companies like Hootsuite and Tweetdeck, along with many others, have honed the art of the “post-once-post-all” social media extravaganza. Hootsuite is an online system that allows you to post immediately or schedule your Tweets. With Hootsuite, you can monitor multiple platforms and post to all with very little effort or time. There are separate tabs for each social media platform you monitor. Tweetdeck is a downloadable application that displays your various platforms on one screen, as opposed to tab views. Like Hootsuite, Tweetdeck also allows you to schedule your updates. If you need to shorten your link addresses, Tweedeck gives you a choice of several URL shorteners. If you are looking for a suite to manage your

social media, there are several others to choose from depending on your particular needs. Don’t feel like you are obligated to just one. They’re free so you can try several to determine which one works best for you.

❖ **On-the-go tools:** This would be a good time to start using your phone for something other than a phone. It’s almost impossible to find a basic phone anymore ... they’re all smartphones that offer so many features and functions to help you organize your day. If you have a data plan, you can use your phone to access your social media, check your e-mails, and post based on incoming news or anything other information that your networks will appreciate. Set up e-mail alerts for industry news so that you are always up-to-date and can post relevant material for your clients. Your phone is a wonderful communication tool that allows you to stay in contact with your clients, making them happy and more apt to provide you referral opportunities.

❖ **Analytics:** Social media activities—keeping your material fresh and current, posting multiple times a day, having meaningful dialogue with your followers/connections—is great, but without analytics, how do you know what’s working and what’s not? Use the free tools within your platforms to monitor the posts and links that resonate best with your clients and peers. You will save time and potential followers by only posting the best content for your networks.

- 1) Facebook has “Facebook Insights” that helps you see how your fans are interacting on your page. It allows you to see who your active users are and where your traffic is coming from.
- 2) To check your Tweet stats, you can use a free tool such as Tweetstats that will display your tweets and monitor how you’re doing in terms of follower interactions.
- 3) If you use bit.ly for a URL shortener, you can visit their site to see how many followers are clicking your links.

Analysis tools for Twitter are plentiful and you can quickly find one that provides the information you need. It bears mentioning that if you do choose to use Hootsuite, you have access to their analytics tools as well.

## Time is money

The goal of social media is to enhance your business by increasing your online

presence and enabling virtual relationships with clients and referral partners. It’s your opportunity to demonstrate your expertise, knowledge of the industry and personality. After all, people want to do business with a person, not a company. You are the face of your company that social media displays for the Internet world, and it’s online where many buyers start their search for information so it’s the right place to be today to grow your business. But, if you get locked up in social media jail, you’re not running your business.

Social media can certainly be fun and it can do a lot for you and your business. It is definitely entertaining to keep up with old high school friends, see how your peers are dealing with regulatory concerns, or read about the antics of the children in your friends and family network. But if you’re using it for business, you have to manage your time wisely and not neglect the daily activities that are the bread and butter of your business. On the other hand, take your social media

commitment seriously. If you abandon your support network, you could suffer a loss of credibility—and potential business.

For social media to prove successful as a business-building strategy, you must designate and maintain a good balance of time. Develop a strategy for social media content as you would with your overall business and use the tools at your disposal to help you manage your time. Effective time management of your networking activities will give you a decided advantage over your less-contemporary competitors.

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## Social Media ... Business on Purpose or on Accident?

By Corrine Jordan

So, you are thinking of jumping on the social media bandwagon or have already started; how is that going? Are you seeing the successes that you hoped for? Are you producing enough sales to fund the efforts you are putting in? If not, you may want to consider a few things.

### Brand communication versus marketing

A great place to start thinking about social media is whether you have a solid brand or not, and most importantly, what your brand is communicating. With this thought process in mind, let’s first address what a brand is. Many people will say a logo or your corporate image. I would say this answer is close, but no cigar.

A brand is your company promise (or meta-communication) to the customer on their experience in working with your company. It is also a representation of what you will find within the walls of the company—or it should.

Many times when I am working with

a client toward their marketing goals, I will visit what message their brand is portraying out in the world and interview individuals within a company to see if this message is in alignment before devising a marketing strategy. I will also research what the world is saying about a particular company in my discovery period. Many times, I will find a haphazard message because the brand communication piece was omitted at the creation phase.

What most people do not understand in establishing a brand is that it is more than a nice logo and some colors that are pleasing to the eye. Instead, a brand should be created with the customer in mind first, how your company fits within the target audience second and how you feel about it third.

Think about the type of person you wish to include in your portfolio of clients. Who are they? What types of products do they buy? What types of activities do they enjoy? Where do they eat? Now think of the other companies

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